

Message

**From:** CLAUSS, KELLY J [AG/1000] [/O=MONSANTO/OU=NA-1000-01/CN=RECIPIENTS/CN=████████]  
**Sent:** 10/6/2015 10:53:02 PM  
**To:** SACHS, ERIC S [AG/1000] [/O=MONSANTO/OU=NA-1000-01/cn=Recipients/cn=████████]; DOBERT, RAYMOND C [AG/1000] [/O=MONSANTO/OU=NA-1000-01/cn=Recipients/cn=████████]; VICINI, JOHN L [AG/1000] [/O=MONSANTO/OU=NA-1000-01/cn=Recipients/cn=████████]  
**CC:** HOOD, AIMEE [AG/1000] [/O=MONSANTO/OU=NA-1000-01/cn=Recipients/cn=████████]; REYNOLDS, TRACEY L [AG/1000] [/O=MONSANTO/OU=Na-1000-01/cn=recipients/cn=████████]  
**Subject:** RE: Chatter: Fact Checking

With vacation last week, I'm just now reading all of this. I don't think this relates to anything from Ketchum. I think this is more related to BIO / CBI staff – I suspect Adrienne may use the term internally with Cathy and Kate. However, I thought I recalled Karl bringing up this conversation with Kate in another email exchange a month or so ago; I don't know that this reference is recent – obviously just concerning to him. I can follow up with Kate in a one-on-one call if helpful.

Regarding the "Biofortified Boys," I hadn't heard about that. I suspect it was for the outreach related to the litigation on the big island – which didn't involve us. I could make a guess whom it may have been though ...

My question is – what is the ask here? How can I help?

**From:** SACHS, ERIC S [AG/1000]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2015 12:27 PM  
**To:** DOBERT, RAYMOND C [AG/1000]; VICINI, JOHN L [AG/1000]; CLAUSS, KELLY J [AG/1000]  
**Cc:** HOOD, AIMEE [AG/1000]; REYNOLDS, TRACEY L [AG/1000]  
**Subject:** RE: Chatter: Fact Checking

Kelly...adding you to this discussion. See message from Karl at bottom and work your way up. Your insights will be very helpful.

Thanks,

Eric

**From:** DOBERT, RAYMOND C [AG/1000]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2015 12:10 PM  
**To:** SACHS, ERIC S [AG/1000] <████████@monsanto.com>; VICINI, JOHN L [AG/1000] <████████@monsanto.com>  
**Cc:** HOOD, AIMEE [AG/1000] <████████@monsanto.com>; REYNOLDS, TRACEY L [AG/1000] <████████@monsanto.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Chatter: Fact Checking

Good point Eric, since Adrienne is on the AgBioChatter; but Kate has contact and relationships with many individuals who are part of AgBioChatter.

I presume that the "unfortunate" language is about the existence of AgBioChatter and characterizations of academics as "Biofortified boys"

Also, thanks for the awareness alert. I did not know that AgBioChatter was a group whose existence was confidential. I thought it was private, but not confidential.

It's unfortunate how ugly this has gotten.

Ray

**From:** SACHS, ERIC S [AG/1000]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2015 11:58 AM  
**To:** VICINI, JOHN L [AG/1000]  
**Cc:** HOOD, AIMEE [AG/1000]; DOBERT, RAYMOND C [AG/1000]; REYNOLDS, TRACEY L [AG/1000]  
**Subject:** Re: Chatter: Fact Checking

Okay. It is possible the POI is at BIO.  
Eric

Sent from my iPhone

On Sep 30, 2015, at 11:36 AM, VICINI, JOHN L [AG/1000] <[REDACTED]@monsanto.com> wrote:  
Eric

I think that you should pass this on to Kelly Clauss. I am not since I don't know who you want to include, but she is the one owns the Ketchum relationship.

John

**From:** SACHS, ERIC S [AG/1000]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2015 10:45 AM  
**To:** HOOD, AIMEE [AG/1000]; VICINI, JOHN L [AG/1000]; DOBERT, RAYMOND C [AG/1000]  
**Cc:** REYNOLDS, TRACEY L [AG/1000]  
**Subject:** FW: Chatter: Fact Checking

All – please read Karl's message below (sorry about the length). There seems to be someone in industry that is associated with GMO Answers that is corresponding with academics and using "unfortunate" language. I would say that some of the statements are "inappropriate" but that isn't really true when the message is part of a private conversation.

My question: Is this matter being addressed? The nature of the correspondence and the language needs to be either limited or more professional.

Eric

**From:** AgBioChatter [REDACTED] [mailto:AgBioChatter [REDACTED]]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 30, 2015 9:24 AM  
**To:** AgBioChatter [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Chatter: Fact Checking

Dear Bruce, all,

Given Philpott's treatment of Jon Entine, it is a good idea to not play into his smear. But at the same time, not getting

answers may make him further interested, as he will assume that there's something to hide. There's no right answer.

It seems that there has been a leak of mentioning AgBioChatter, and it is inevitable that it will become a target for future FOIAs. It sounds like Ruskin did not include it in his last round of FOIAs but likely will in the future. If anyone here has not taken **the Ruskin Cleanse** of these private emails it will mean more content for them to twist and string into a false narrative. We've already seen how they have done it so far - including not being able to read into Tamar Haspel's sarcasm! Ruskin is Harvard-educated and is no dummy, although he often acts like one when he should know better.

The goal of AgBioChatter has been, in my view, to provide a private forum where academic scientists could discuss news and issues related to GMOs in agriculture, share tips and advice, and start collaborations on projects. Furthermore, the inclusion of 1 or 2 members of industry has allowed the group to be able to find out their perspective on some of these issues. For each of these functions, this listserv has been immensely valuable, and someday in the future a story will be written that will talk about how important this discussion has been. Due to potential future outside references to this private group, I wonder what, if any, would be the public story about the group? To help answer this question, it will be important for those in the group who have been FOIAed to know what emails have been gathered up to be handed over, since some now just include the word "Monsanto" as the criterion.

I received some good advice from a colleague in Hawaii while I was speaking there in 2013, and I would like to communicate this to everyone here and to members of industry someday as well. The advice that I got from my colleague was to be careful what you put in emails, and to also be careful how you present yourself to others who may refer to you in their own emails and documents. She said that there was a case where a lawsuit to industry (I forget what industry) resulted in obtaining a document that listed academics as being 'friendly' to the industry and who could be flown out at a moments' notice to say nice things and say they were independent (I forget whether or not they were getting paid). This was very damaging to the case for the industry, as well as any of the academics who were included in this list. Essentially, it showed that the industry viewed them as being on their side, and it weakened their messages whenever they spoke about the topic. The really unfortunate thing for the academics is that they had no control over how the industry would describe them in an internal document, and many may have not been aware that they were seen in such a light.

Ironically, in the emails leading up to the same Hawaii trip, one member of industry referred to Kevin, Jon, Steve, and myself as "the Biofortified Boys" and talked about how they are 'using' us as part of their communication plan. That email is the one that Ruskin chose to leak to the NY Times, and they've already suggested on twitter that I must be at the center of the industry's GMO communications (where's that check, eh?). My response to this industry member asking for them not to refer to us in such a manner was naturally not included. Industry and Academia have overlapping but divergent goals, and it is always good to keep that in mind. I have met members of industry who understood their boundaries when it came to independent academics, and members of industry who did not.

I was talking to Kate Hall of GMO Answers about the FOIA issue, and her knowledge of the AgBioChatter group was volunteered to me. I know that I have *not* referred to this group outside of it by name except in verbal conversation with my wife. My understanding was that this was a group that was supposed to remain private. A question for thought: could a member of industry have a document somewhere that says in their communication dissemination plan, "send information to X person to promote to AgBioChatter"?

In conclusion, the science has gotten caught up in politics, and the political reality is inescapable that any amount of organizing and information-sharing between people who are seen as being on the opposite side from the politicians will be argued to be indicative of a political alliance. Ruskin and company have not uncovered a single false fact about Ag

Biotech as a result of these FOIAs, and are engaged only in political smears. They are dropping hints online that they've 'discovered' that the scientific consensus is all just a conspiracy, even though they have not FOIAed any of the actual research this is based on. Instead, it will be quote-mines and attacks to try to get communicators to stop doing what they are doing, including wasting their time. Since this is politics, my question is what political goal is this attack working toward? GMO labeling round 2 in California? GMO bans?

Karl

On 9/29/2015 11:51 PM, Bruce Chassy [REDACTED]@icloud.com [AgBioChatter] wrote:

Earlier today Alan asked about a fact checker from Mother Jones. She has written several of us. I am going to paste below a draft of the letter I will send her tomorrow. Note that it is copied to the Editor and to a Dean of Journalism who is the Editor of Columbia Journalism Review. A bit of context is needed here to frame what's going on. First of all these inquiries aren't fact checking, they are fishing. As one noted journalist explained to me:

"Just keep in mind when (and if) you respond that the goal of Tom Philpott is to damage your reputation. He will do everything he can to stretch or otherwise twist what went on to put in the most unflattering light.

Note that you have NO OBLIGATION to respond to him. I've been on the other side of this, as a reporter. When the subject doesn't respond, it puts the reporter in a huge pickle. They often drop a line of inquiry when no one responds. When someone does respond, it opens up a line of communication and often leads to further trouble. I have almost always urged people to not respond to any question in which there is a grey area. I would personally not respond to a request from Philpott—I would just ignore it. You may choose to respond, but I urge you to volunteer nothing beyond the question asked if you do decide to. Many questions are 'fishing expeditions' and your response could just embolden him."

I think that's good advice, you have nothing to gain by helping someone whose mind is already made up about how the story comes out.

I received a rather long list of questions to which I plan to respond without supplying the requested information. Here's a draft of what I intend to send in tomorrow. I hope it is useful to some of you who might be considering your response. I have also pasted below a similar sort of incident I had with Carey Gillam of Reuters. Read her e-mails and my responses from the bottom up and then my response to her at the very top of the paste.

Ms. Pauly:

Mr. Philpott did not attempt to reach me for an interview related to the story you claim to be fact-checking. He is therefore apparently relying solely upon third-party information for his story. It would be irresponsible to respond to your questions below since they are based hearsay. I could in any case not answer appropriately without additional information about the source and context on which the claims are based as, for example, a copy of the story, or excerpts from it, and the sources on which the statements are based. If this inquiry arises from claims associated with the U.S.

Right to Know FOIA harassment campaign against academic scientists; I direct Mr. Philpott to my statement addressing this issue which can be found at <http://www.academicreview.org>

Further, the vast majority of your questions are not “fact checking” but appear to be queries that are fishing for information. They appear not to be based on any specific source or claim to which I am privy. The following questions don’t appear to be seeking to verify anything:

- “In what capacity did you contribute to the op-ed? Did you help with drafting it?”
- “Why was your name not included in the byline?”
- “What was your relationship with Batra at this time?”
- “Was “AgBioChatter” comprised of professors, or biotech industry professionals, or both?”
- “Did you end up going and giving the presentation?”
- “Who paid for your expenses on this trip?”

Are you a fact checker or contributor to Mr. Philpott’s article? Typically fact checkers provide statements and facts which one is asked to verify. Did Mr. Philpott interview any academics about whom he’s writing? Your inquiry implies Mr. Philpott and Mother Jones have made various false or misleading assumptions that would not be supported by a responsible and rigorous journalistic inquiry.

Had you or Mr. Philpott bothered to ask for an interview before sending your questions masquerading as “fact checking” on deadline I would have been inclined to give you the similar professional courtesy in response. I think many people, and certainly any who routinely review the work of journalism professionals, would expect more of Mother Jones, particularly with regards to its treatment of independent public sector academics.

Sincerely,

Bruce M. Chassy, PhD

Professor Emeritus of Food Science and Nutrition

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Cc: Clara Jeffery, editor in chief Mother Jones, [REDACTED]@motherjones.com

Cc: Clint Hendler, Managing Editor, [REDACTED]@motherjones.com

Cc: Steve Coll, Dean Columbia University School of Journalism, [REDACTED]@columbia.edu

**From:** Bruce Chassy [mailto:██████████@me.com]  
**Sent:** Friday, September 18, 2015 12:51 AM  
**To:** Gillam, Carey I. (Reuters News)  
**Cc:** Tracey, Brian R. (Reuters); Adler, Stephen J. (Reuters); Stanley, Deirdre (TR Exec)  
**Subject:** Re: your emails with Monsanto

Ms. Gillam:

I'm confounded by your highly charged characterizations, allegations and "spin" about my correspondence.

The only specific question you've raised regards my science video teaching modules on biotechnology: *"Additionally, in one exchange from 2012, you discuss with Monsanto executives a "small grant" from USDA and Dept of State to make 10 YouTube videos. You note you are featuring Monsanto executives in these and you state you think it is important for these videos to the university."* The facts are: I was asked by and received a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of State to produce a small number of academic videos on agricultural biotechnology. These videos were produced solely with academic participants and with no involvement by or from any industry representatives. These videos are all available here: <https://www.youtube.com/user/AcademicsReview/>

In your email, there are no other questions; just accusations and unsupported conjecture:

- "the communications do *seem to* go beyond engagement with Monsanto and do not *seem to be very transparent...*"
- "you *seek to dig up* information to use against Professor Huber to *try to contradict* his work..."
- "you *appear to solicit* and welcome "edits" by Monsanto officials to presentations you make as *a seemingly independent* academic..."

These are not questions but accusation. Is this retaliation for my critical analysis of your past reporting, in which I've well-documented many misrepresentations by you on crop biotechnology science?

I reiterate that I'm happy to address any issues of fact regarding my correspondence. However, as requested please provide and highlight specific correspondence upon which you are basing your interpretations and conjectures.

Sincerely,

Bruce Chassy, PhD  
Professor Emeritus,  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

cc: Brian Tracey, U.S. Managing Editor  
Stephen Adler, President and editor in chief  
Deirdre Stanley, Executive Vice President and General Counsel

On Sep 16, 2015, at 11:00 AM, ██████████@thomsonreuters.com wrote:

Well that is awkward; my email glitched as I was trying to edit and finish the email below to you and I did not get to finish my question. I was trying to ask you this: Why do you think it is not important for Illinois taxpayers to know that a

professor at their publicly funded university has such close and extensive ties to Monsanto that he is running his public presentations about GMOs by Monsanto at a time when the health and safety debate is quite intense?

As well, can you explain how you believe you were transparent with your Monsanto relationship in the blogs you wrote, the presentations you gave, and the lobbying you did at EPA and elsewhere?

Thanks so much, and sorry for the glitch in my prior attempt to send you an email.

Carey Gillam

National Correspondent

Reuters News

[REDACTED] (desk)

[REDACTED] (mobile)

[REDACTED]@thomsonreuters.com

<https://twitter.com/careygillam>

**From:** Gillam, Carey I. (Reuters News)

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 16, 2015 12:57 PM

**To:** 'Bruce Chassy'

**Subject:** RE: your emails with Monsanto

Thank you for providing that link; it does answer many questions I would have for you. Many of the communications do seem to go beyond engagement with Monsanto and do not seem to be very transparent. You discuss how Monsanto might "spin" the USGS glyphosate/water survey; you seek to dig up information to use against Professor Huber to try to contradict his work; and you appear to solicit and welcome "edits" by Monsanto officials to presentations you make as a seemingly independent academic. Additionally, in one exchange from 2012, you discuss with Monsanto executives a "small grant" from USDA and Dept of State to make 10 YouTube videos. You note you are featuring Monsanto executives in these and you state you think it is important for these videos to the university.

I just wonder why you don't think it is important for Illinois taxpayers to know that their taxpayer dollars were going to a univare going to someone who is so actively promoting the interests of a private corporation like Monsanto

Carey Gillam

National Correspondent

Reuters News

[REDACTED] (desk)

[REDACTED] (mobile)

[REDACTED]@thomsonreuters.com

<https://twitter.com/careygillam>

**From:** Bruce Chassy [mailto:[REDACTED]@me.com]

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 15, 2015 5:14 PM

**To:** Gillam, Carey I. (Reuters News)

**Subject:** Re: your emails with Monsanto

Cary

First let me apologize for not getting back to you sooner, I know reporters have deadlines and short turnarounds. I will try to respond quickly but be advised I'm on the road tomorrow, will be in an all day workshop Thursday, and will be driving back home on Friday.

It may help you get started to take a look at my perspective about the e-mails which I posted at

[The USRTK FOIA Campaign Against Academics: 40-plus years of public science, research and teaching under assault](#)

It would probably be better for you if you e-mailed questions for me to consider. When you do, please include the specific e-mail or e-mails to which you refer in your question to provide context.

Regards

Bruce

On Sep 15, 2015, at 9:39 AM, [REDACTED]@thomsonreuters.com wrote:

Greetings Professor Chassy – I've been reading through many, many emails between yourself and Monsanto executives and believe I may be writing a bit about them. I'm wondering if you might provide me with your perspective on this relationship and your work promoting the safety and benefits of GMOs.

I have a number of very specific questions, but am not sure if you would like to discuss the situation over the phone, or if you prefer to dialogue via email. I am particularly interested in your trip to India arranged by Monsanto and the discussion of making YouTube videos promoting GMOs funded by the State Dept and USDA.

Please let me know if you would like to talk this over, and/or if you have a statement you'd like to provide.

Carey Gillam

National Correspondent

Reuters News

[REDACTED] (desk)

[REDACTED] (mobile)

[REDACTED]@thomsonreuters.com

<https://twitter.com/careygillam>

---

Posted by: Karl Haro von Mogel <[REDACTED]@inoculatedmind.com>

---

[Reply via web post](#) \* [Reply to sender](#) \* [Reply to group](#) \* [Start a New Topic](#) \* [Messages in this topic \(2\)](#)

**VISIT YOUR GROUP**

[Privacy](#) \* [Unsubscribe](#) \* [Terms of Use](#)